

Committee on Education and the Workforce U.S. House of Representatives



June 6, 2000

HELP CREATE A LITERATE POPULATION! SUPPORT THE LITERACY INVOLVES FAMILIES TOGETHER ACT

Dear Colleague:

In the near future, the House of Representatives will consider H.R. 3222, the “Literacy Involves Families Together Act (LIFT).” This legislation is aimed at increasing the quality of family literacy programs for some of our nation’s most vulnerable families. It also reauthorizes the Even Start Family Literacy Program and the Inexpensive Book Distribution Program (Reading is Fundamental/RIF).

The fact is, parents are the key to their child’s academic success. This principle is at the heart of all family literacy programs. The more parents read to their children and actively participate in their education, the greater the probability their children will succeed in school. Unfortunately, many parents cannot help their children because they themselves cannot read. But there is good news for these parents. Research has demonstrated that family literacy programs empower parents to be their child’s first and most important teacher. Even Start and other family literacy programs work with parents to raise their literacy skills and help them understand how to be full partners in their child’s education.

H.R. 3222 takes steps to ensure that federally funded family literacy programs provide families with high quality services. It would:

- Ensure that instructional programs for children participating in Even Start are based on scientifically based reading research;
- Allow states to use a portion of their funding for training and technical assistance to family literacy instructors to help improve the quality of local Even Start programs;
- Authorize research to identify the most effective ways to improve literacy among adults with reading difficulties; and
- Ensure academic instruction in family literacy programs is being provided by qualified instructors.

For many families, participation in family literacy programs is the lifeline they need to become self-sufficient. Family literacy programs help break cycles of illiteracy and poverty.

I encourage you to join me in supporting H.R. 3222, “The Literacy Involves Families Together Act,” when it is considered by the House of Representatives. Your vote will help ensure that all parents have the skills necessary to help their children succeed in school. If you have questions about this legislation, please call Lynn Selmsler or Shane Wright at X56558.

Sincerely,

BILL GOODLING
Chairman